BALLET TODAY

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/- SPECIAL NEW YORK CITY BALLET NUMBER 1/-

George Balanchine
Artistic Director

CAPEZIO

SALUTES

THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET

We are happy indeed to join in the Bravos and congratulations to the New York City Ballet on the occasion of their first European engagement. The exchange of ballet engagements between our countries further emphasizes the ever-growing interest in dance art and the greatness of dance as the universal language, limitless in its possibilities of expression and communication.

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BALLET TODAY

. 3. No. 25 July 1950

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DITORIAL COMMENT

AY 15th was Nostalgia Night at Sadler's Wells Theatre for many of us—a gloriously happy ening, and one that was also a little sad as these casions so often are. It was in every way a Gala rformance with audience and dancers on the cosiest terms. The programme was rich in names we ce knew so well (and never will forget) and there the stage were those familiar people, none of em, I swear, looking a day older. How right we re when we said (as we have so often) "Ah, but you ould have seen Ursula Moreton and Sheila McCarthy *The Rake's Progress*!" And how Harold Turner and alter Gore showed us what the bored troupers of pular song ought to look like! It should have been rner and William Chappell because Gore was eady doing the Rake and the idea was to give every ssible person something to do, but Chappell sprained ankle rehearsing on the very morning of the Great ay so perforce had to be content to appear as a nping member of the audience. Mary Honer, who *id* she hadn't danced a step for three years, seemed belie this with every moment of her inane Bride in *Wedding Bouquet*, and how we loved Ninette de alois who we *know* had not danced since 1937 when ie frankly gave up the attempt in the same ballet. umps in the throat for Fonteyn's Young Tregennis, unexpectedly small and desolate (to think we used say "She isn't as good as Freda Bamford!"), and exquisitely refusing throughout the evening to be ie great ballerina.

This is no time for criticism, but I did feel that I would have sacrificed *The Haunted Ballroom* (and even hat Young Tregennis) to see the whole of *The Rake's rogress* performed in the theatre for which it was esigned, particularly as Helpmann gave us his nonumental Bridegroom which was richness enough or one evening. I fear I am boring on the subject of his performance, but to me it is the quintessence of omedy and I welcome any opportunity of mentioning t. Perhaps my favourite incident was the chaotic half minute in *A Wedding Bouquet* when those whose memories had but a precarious hold on the matter in hand all simultaneously forgot and were hectically dragooned into something approximating positions by those who still really did know it. "Claude hasn't a clue," rang delightedly round the circle, but Mr. Newman, capering gallantly, was equal to this as, in the past, he was equal to many another tricky situation.

Miss de Valois' warm and loving speech paid tribute to the Company, past and present, whose loyalty, comradeship and unselfish devotion to the art which they put before themselves had made this achievement possible. Twenty-one years old! It hardly seems true that some of us have been watching Sadler's Wells Ballet for all that time, but so it is. May all of us, and all those dancers we saw on May 15th and those who could not appear, still be here to herald the Jubilee performance.

The next day, still greatly invigorated by their breath of east end air, Sadler's Wells at Covent Garden gave such a performance of *Le Lac des Cygnes* as had us all busy telephoning each other next day. For the first time in several years I saw it from above and looked down on the precise and beautiful floor patterns of the *corps de ballet*. Violetta Elvin, Anne Negus and Alexis Rassine gave the best *pas de trois* for many a long day: the male solo has been considerably altered—for the better at the beginning, in my opinion, though I feel that if the *coupés jetés en tournant* are to be cut (and no one these days seems to be able to perform them really well) it would be preferable not to finish with a long series of *entrechats* since the coda to the third act *pas de deux* is, in this version, already arranged for the Prince in the same way and he should have the prior claim. For Fonteyn and Somes it was an evening when neither of them could put a finger wrong and their third act *pas de deux* was almost insolent in its control and timing. It was Fonteyn's first "big" night after her return from her Milan triumph and how rehearsing for this was fitted in with the Gala preparations I cannot imagine, but she was in stupendous form.

We shall be welcoming the New York City Ballet to the Royal Opera House on July 10th. Meanwhile, meet the company in the centre pages of this issue.

In his article on the New York season, Arthur Todd writes of "reprisals" threatened in Paris to visiting American dancers for the comparatively cool reception accorded to Yvette Chauviré when she danced with the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. This became an unpleasant actuality at the first performance of Les Ballets Americains, directed by Bentley Stone and Ruth Page, on May 8th at the Champs-Elysées Theatre. A large claque, obviously engaged for the purpose, hissed and booed everything in so disgraceful a manner that many well-known personalities in the

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BALLABILE

By MARY CLARKE

IN talking about Roland Petit's *Ballabile* (first presented at Covent Garden on May 5th) we must, I think, beware of balfing. The verb to balfe* was coined by James Agate in 1929 but never became as widely used as it deserved. Agate defined it as "To talk of anything with respect beyond its category," and deplored the amount of balfing that went on over the frothier productions of the musical comedy stage. No one minds admitting that musicals can be great fun and delightful entertainment: what most of us would resist to the death is any suggestion that they are important to the development of the Drama. *Ballabile*, likewise, isn't going to revolutionise Ballet or, possibly, even remain with us for many years, but providing we recognise this from the outset and do not pretend that we are talking about a *Petrouchka* or an *Apollo* it would be churlish to deny the ballet's contribution to present laughter and delight.

The quality I like best in the ballet is Petit's happy knack of avoiding the obvious. He has an enormous capacity for inventing nonsensical situations and pays his audience the compliment of never completely explaining them. Half the time one is not quite certain what is going on and there is something deliciously provocative in this uncertainty; it is so different from the common run of ballets that offer a stock situation on a plate and leave no room for nuances of meaning to be contributed by the spectator. One of the ballet's loveliest moment is in the Sunday on the River episode when Alexander Grant (who has a special gift of appearing solitary in the midst of a crowd) walks across the stage, climbs a ladder and sits quite still, fishing. There is no explanation, no reason; he simply does it. And in the Street in the Rain we see a funeral which is ghoulishly funny and equally unexplained. When it comes to throwing rings round the moon Roland Petit can do as well as Jean Anouilh any day: the quantity lacking in *Ballabile* is technical craftsmanship to back it up, for it is the choreography that is going to prove the Achilles' heel and shorten the ballet's life.

The dramatic possibilities of ballet seem to have had increasing fascination for M. Petit since he found he could excite and move people with *Les Forains*. He has consequently pursued this end and achieved his most powerful composition with *Le Jeune Homme et la Mort* while, by throwing in every theatrical trick he knew, he pulled off a *succès fou* with *Carmen*. Advance in one direction, however, has resulted in a loss of

* *For derivation see Agate*: Immoment Toys, *Cape* 1945, *pp.* 50-51.

VIOLETTA ELVIN AS ODETTE IN "LE LAC DES CYGNES". HER PERFORMANCE AS ODETTE-ODILE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE OUTSTANDING FEATURES OF THE COVENT GARDEN SEASON

Photograph by Helga Sharland

tograph by
ward Mandinian

LAND PETIT CON-
NT LAMBERT AND
TONI CLAVE TAKING
CALL ON THE FIRST
GHT OF "BALLABILE"

ontrol over the less dramatic forms of ballet-making hd in the lightly connected *Suite de danses* type of allet he has done nothing as good as *Les Amours de upiter*. *Ballabile* is, of course, a vastly better piece f choreographic construction than, say, *Treize Danses* ut one still gets the impression that M. Petit tosses ff the choreography in hit-or-miss fashion after he as decided on the general stage spectacle. The dance is superimposed, and carelessly ; it has no real nity with anything else that is happening. Nevertheless it does achieve beautiful passages such as Elvin's street solo and the whole Circus on the Green episode while the dance parodies of the four cygnets, *Le Tricorne* and Carmen herself are brilliant.

M. Petit is obliged to carry the blame for the ballet's shortcomings simply because he has been so enormously fortunate in all his collaborators. Antoni Clavé follows up *Los Caprichos* and *Carmen* with settings and costumes so absolutely ravishing that I would sit through almost any choreography in order to look at them. Here is a real designer, a real man of the theatre and Sadler's Wells must never drop *Ballabile* until they have another Clavé ballet to replace it. Constant Lambert's arrangement of the Chabrier music must have been a labour of love for he has long championed such composers of " light " music and now has a chance to show people why. For the requirements of the ballet I think there is a little too much of the final *Espana* excerpt (the dancers are near exhaustion by this point and it is dangerous to continue a jibe too long) and I hope Mr. Lambert realises how many hearts he has broken by including part of the score of *Cotillon*.

As for the performance, what a wonderful company is Sadler's Wells ! In a few weeks the dancers turn from the matchless classicism of Balanchine to the Parisian mannerisms of Petit and perform both superbly. It was a happy idea to give the ballet to the younger dancers and the way in which they all rose to it proves once again that though dancers may die of overwork they can also be killed as artists by having nothing whatever to do. Anne Negus blossoms into the comèdienne of the company and is nothing less than a riot. Margaret Dale, in a tiny passage as an equestrienne, displayed a vitality that won her a sudden spontaneous round of applause. Violetta Elvin manages a lot of very intricate choreography with positively casual ease and suggests in the Circus scene that she may one day be a delightful Swanilda. Philip Chatfield, though immature as a personality, partners deftly and Kenneth Melville and Gilbert Vernon are both quite brilliant. About Alexander Grant I am a little unhappy. He is very, very good and yet I am sure he could be even better. He dances with his whole heart but there is less heart to the performance than there is to his Jester and his Barber.

Would a little more make-up help ? The tights and top hats that the boys wear in the early scenes suggest the zany Parisian music hall quartet, Les Frères Jacques, and if the resemblance was pushed further to include a droopy moustache I think Grant might suddenly get the "feel" of his part. In the early scenes he would look more French and in Impressions of Spain he would be a positive Jerry Colonna.

At its first performance *Ballabile* was followed by such a superlative performance of *Ballet Imperial* that if I had paid three guineas for my seat I should have said it was worth it—which is not the way one has felt at some other Gala Performances at Covent Garden. Since the first ballet had been *Les Patineurs* I should think the boards of the stage were danced on more that night than for many a long year. *Les Patineurs* is, however, not in very good shape ; when first produced it contained the cream of the 1937 company and though standards are in some ways higher now, it always needs the best possible performer in every role. But it still has its moments : Rowena Jackson's *fouettés* are literally dazzling in their brilliance and I enjoy her beautifully spaced single ones even more than the doubles and triples she tosses off so nonchalantly. April Olrich may eventually prove the best successor to Elizabeth Miller as the other "blue girl"; there is superb control in her turns.

The week of *Cinderellas* inserted to tide us over while Fonteyn and Helpmann were in Milan revealed some very extraordinary casting—particularly in the choice of the four fairies who seemed to range consistently from the tallest to the tiniest dancers in the company. In the first act *soli* this is no great matter but when the four girls dance together from then on it makes them all look ridiculous. Kenneth Macmillan took over Helpmann's Ugly Sister and by the end of the week was giving a remarkably good performance. He played it entirely his own way and got all the usual laughs with some extra ones for a wildly swinging leg that performed unexpected high kicks with a quite terrifying flightiness. There must be other roles in the repertoire that would suit Alexis Rassine better than the Prince in *Cinderella*. It is a bricks-without-straw role, anyway, and he has never excelled in parts that were not good to begin with. As for his partnering, one can only hope for his ballerina's sake that it is not as perilous as it appears to be.

TELEVISION SURVEY

By LISA GORDON SMITH

ON February 28th, viewers had to bid what we hope is only a temporary farewell to the popular *Ballet for Beginners* series. This experiment has been, on the whole, an enormous success, and the final programme revived some pleasant memories, for an effort was made to summarise the whole series as well as to give some fresh information. This formidable task was well accomplished to an admirable commentary by Peggy van Praagh.

Ballet Rambert was on tour in Germany, but the dancers included Sheilah O'Reilly and David Blair from Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet, and Domini Callaghan and Michel de Lutry, late of the International via the lamented Metropolitan Ballet.

Stanislas Idzikowski rehearsed the Blue Bird *pas de deux*, which "came over" better than is customary with virtuoso classical excerpts, and Peggy van Praagh reconstructed Antony Tudor's delightful *Soirée Musicale*, borrowed, with permission, from the repertoire of Ballet Rambert.

The second series, now almost a certainty, will undoubtedly be an improvement on the first, valuable though this was, and it may be awaited with interest. In the meantime, it is to be hoped that Philip Bate and teleballet will not be allowed to neglect each other.

This producer's name has been associated also with French Ballet in another well-remembered series of programmes, some eighteen months ago, and on April 3rd, we had a further example of his work in this connection, featuring the Paris Opera Ballet.

The occasion was chiefly noteworthy for the fact that Serge Lifar danced, a somewhat rare occurrence outside Paris.

The programme consisted of four examples of his choreography, the best being *Entre Deux Rondes*, in which Lifar danced as the Statue and Josette Clavier as the Little Degas Dancer.

This is a pleasing ballet, and Lifar wisely choreographed his own part to suit his present style of dancing. In selecting Josette Clavier, a *coryphée*, for this ballet, he created a local scandal in the Paris Opera, for by all their rigid laws and canons she was not due for such rapid promotion ; but by the more rational law of this young dancer's ability and suitability, it was rather more than Quite All Right By Us !

Etude Chorégraphique, to music by Schumann, was danced by Madeleine Lafon and Max Bozzoni and is a ballet which it might be a great pleasure to see on the stage. Certainly on television, tactfully handled as it was, it was extremely successful.

B.C. photograph

JOSETTE CLAVIER AND SERGE LIFAR IN "ENTRE DEUX RONDES", TELEVISED IN APRIL

On the subject of the third ballet *Passion*, discussion ıs run high, and there can be few ballets on which ıere are more different, widely varied and firmly held pinions. I, personally, endorse that of a certain very ımous dancer who remarked at the end, "Well, that *ras* a lot of dancing!" But many qualified authorities ɔved it, so it must be a matter of taste. For my part, f that is Passion, give me bromide!

La Mort du Cygne is too well known to need much :omment, but it is worth putting on record that Nina Vyroubova is as lovely as ever, if not lovelier,

Hand in glove with producer Christian Simpson, Celia Franca choreographed another dance drama for May 1st.

The Eve of St. Agnes was, as might be expected from ın artist as progressive as Celia Franca, a more polished work than *Salome*. Keats, perhaps, might have found a few surprises in this interpretation of his work, for there was considerable stress on some characters and incidents which he had only mentioned in passing. But the drama and its interpretation was intensely moving and often exciting, the dancing of very good quality and some of the "pictures" exquisite.

There were a few mishaps; a camera joined the *corps de ballet* for a brief moment—a few dancers were chopped in half for moving too quickly (or perhaps the camera moved too slowly?) but on the whole it was a great success and should be repeated.

Christian Simpson rationalised his passion for pillars most effectively, and Celia Franca's choreography for the Revel scenes was no less than magnificent; Svetlana Beriosova was as spiritually-beautiful as ever, and even improved by appearing slightly slimmer. John Byron, who recited the poem on to a record to be played while he mimed and danced the lead, was excellent at everything. Despite the pleasing voice, there is reason for regret that he gave up dancing in favour of drama.

And there must be a very special laural wreath for John Lanchbery for the beauty of his score.

There is yet far to go, and many interesting experiments to be made, but there is no doubt that teleballet is progressing very favourably and promises to continue to do so.

BALLET RAMBERT AT THE LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH

By FRANK JACKSON

THE new ballet in the Rambert season at the Lyric, Hammersmith (May 2nd—20th), was Walter Gore's *Winter Night*, which had its première in Australia, during the Company's tour there.

Set to the lushly emotional Rachmaninov 2nd Piano Concerto, its theme might, unkindly, be summarised as Boy giving hell to two girls. Boy, having met girl A, then meets girl B, to go off with her to ultimate calm and happiness, while girl A indulges in spasmodic paroxysms of grief, despair and jealousy, all to no avail.

There have been complaints about Gore's choice of music in this instance but I thought, on the contrary, that the exhibitionist *Sturm und Drang* of the Concerto was well matched by the theme of the ballet. This is not a question of sincerity or otherwise.

No ballet of Gore's could be a complete loss and there are several fleeting moments when the dancing exactly conveys a relationship between three people which convinces. At other times the dancing conveys nothing; or the emotions expressed overpower their means of expression. Most of these convincing moments come during the first movement, after which it is all too clear that the choreographer has said all he has to say. But, alas, Rachmaninov has yet two more movements in which to tear out his heart, and the choreographer must follow him.

Gore has created a singularly colourless part for himself as the sought-after man. All attention is concentrated on Margaret Hill and Paula Hinton as girls A and B. When Beryl Goldwyn took over Paula Hinton's part, the ballet became, to all intents and purposes, a solo for Margaret Hill; for Beryl Goldwyn has not yet learnt how to project her stage personality.

But what am I to say about the part played by the *corps de ballet*? The programme informs me that *Winter Night* " is not an abstract ballet, neither is it a ballet of realism. It is a Dance Allegory . . . " What allegorical role the *corps* fulfils baffles me completely. They rush in and out at odd moments, sometimes to bar the road between man and first girl; sometimes to lift first girl ; at other times to play ring-a-ring-a-roses, or to posture in a manner which reminded me forcibly of Staff's caricature of the symphonic manner in *Czernyana*.

The result was vaguely old-fashioned, and I might have lapped it up in the days when youth and inexperience and the prevailing emotional temperature led me to believe that *Dante Sonata* was the ultimate in choreographic expression.

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

PAULA HINTON, MARGARET HILL AND WALTER GORE IN "WINTER NIGHT"

It is just possible that *Winter Night* might look more convincing on a large stage with a full *corps de ballet* and orchestra (but bouquets to Marjorie Reed for her playing of the solo piano part). I can only judge it as it is presented to us.

For the rest of the repertoire, Mme. Rambert had, wisely, abandoned all attempts at so-called " classical " ballet and concentrated on works designed for a small company. The programme, indeed, contained some of the finest small-scale ballets ever conceived. To mention a few, there were Tudor's *Jardin aux Lilas*, *Dark Elegies* and *Gala Performance* ; Ashton's *Les Masques* ; Staff's *Peter and the Wolf* and Gore's own delightful *Simple Symphony*.

But it would be stupid and useless to pretend that these works, as performed at this particular season, bore any but a surface relationship to their original conception. In many of them there were fine *individual* performances. Thus, Paula Hinton's Mrs. Tebrick—more animal than as played by Sally Gilmour —was immensely moving ; I liked Margaret Hill as Caroline, though she is inclined to overstate what used to be the merest hint. These two dancers were also most enjoyable in *Gala Performance* and gave me the only pleasure I got from *Winter Night*. I missed Sally Gilmour's Mrs. Tebrick, but saw her La Goulue —a magnificent-looking creature, a trifle too respectable perhaps, but a real person. How good it was to see this unique artist again ! Barbara Grimes made herself very useful during the season, too, even

ncing "An Episode from his Past" in *Jardin aux as* at short notice when Celia Franca fell ill, and aking a fine job of it.

But three or four dancers of quality do not make a llet company. Admittedly, the *corps de ballet* has tle to do in many of these works, but that little is portant and must be well done. Whatever you ink about *The Planets* it is a more considerable work an it seemed on this occasion, when the *corps* made nsense out of most of it, as they spoiled *Simple mphony* and *Plaisance*. The boys, in particular, were t really ready for public performances at all.

Yet goodness knows, now there is such a danger that ur ballet may become as unexciting as it is grand, here is an urgent need for a small organisation, like e Rambert, with a willingness to experiment and to evelop and make use of the enormous amount of tent, largely frustrated, talent which exists in this untry. Perhaps the flourishing Rambert school will pply the Company shortly with dancers of sufficient uantity and quality for the purpose.

TWO NEW BALLETS AT THE PARIS OPERA

By FERDINAND REYNA

DURING April, the Paris Opera presented two new ballets. The first, *L'Inconnue* (*The Unknown*) which had its first night on April 20th, has a story by Léandre Vaillat. It tells of a soldier wandering in a town destroyed by bombardment who enters a ruined mansion where a comrade joins him. An old piano stands in a corner. The first soldier (Serge Lifar) begins to play a sad tune. A girl in rags comes in unexpectedly : the house is hers. While the soldier continues to play a mysterious woman enters, representing destiny perhaps, and draws the pianist into a tragic dance. But the house crumbles to pieces, the soldier is killed and the others go away.

The accompanying score, by René Jolivet, is simple, clear, vigorous and creates the atmosphere well. But the choreography by Lifar, who interprets the role of the soldier pianist, is really too banal and never rises to the demands of such a subject. Lifar's repetition of the same steps, the same attitudes which we already know so well has become monotonous. The *ensemble* completely lacks invention and one watches the ballet without emotion. Michel Renault (the second soldier) and the girl in tatters (Lyane Daydé) received great applause for their *pas de deux*. The mysterious woman (Tamara Toumanova) is a part created without brilliance or originality. In *L'Inconnue* this magnificent artist has nothing in which to show her qualities. The decor by Charles Blanc is not in accord with the tragic grandeur of the subject. In short, the ballet is altogether inferior to the idea on which it is based.

In an entirely different category is *Le Chevalier Errant*, presented on April 26th, which tells the story of Don Quixote, the scenario having been written by Madame Elisabeth de Gramont. This is a ballet with words and chorus, the verse having been composed by the poet, Alexandre Arnoux. The music is by Jacques Ibert, the scenery and costumes by Pedro Flores. After an introduction spoken before a curtain representing Cervantes with his hero, we see the classic combat with the windmills, the liberation of the galley slaves and the death of Don Quixote brought about by a fairground giant. In the finale, Lifar, mounted on a pedestal, becomes the statue of Don Quixote himself. Ibert's score undoubtedly dominates the whole work with its grandiose symphonic conception which, richly colourful in rhythm, holds the attention throughout. The choreography of Lifar matches the ideas of both poet and musician and the different sides of the Knight Errant's character are well brought out though there is no particular originality in the conception.

The other stars, Christiane Vaussard, Lycette Darsonval and Micheline Bardin perform their roles brilliantly. Some Spanish dances are very well done by Espanita Cortez.

On the same night Nina Vyroubova made a signal success in *Suite en Blanc*. After the inevitable hesitancy and the understandable coldness of the first months on these heights, Vyroubova has now taken possession of the great stage. She is showing herself as a great star in every way and she has not yet finished surprising us.

Leonide Massine has just mounted a very successful version of *La Boutique Fantasque* at the Opera Comique. Massine himself, Solange Schwarz and Paul Goubé have the leading roles.

The Circle of Journalists and Critics of the Dance in Paris are organising for the Spring of 1951 an International Festival of Dance Films which will probably be given at the Palais Chaillot.

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dance world of Paris wrote letters to the Press strongly deploring the incident and disassociating themselves from such an outrage.

Everyone will want to join with me in congratulating Mr. Cyril W. Beaumont and Mr. Arnold L. Haskell on both of whom the President of the French Republic has recently conferred the Legion of Honour "for their services to French Ballet." It will be remembered that Miss Ninette de Valois and Mr. David Webster received a similar honour during Monsieur Auriol's recent visit to this country.

P.W.M.

NEW YORK CITY BALLET: A CHRONOLOGY

By ANATOLE CHUJOY

All photographs in this section by Walter E. Owen, New York

THE New York City Ballet is a manifestation of faith and perseverance, a labour of love, of just two persons : George Balanchine, its artistic director and chief choreographer, and Lincoln Kirstein, its general director.

Under its present name the New York City Ballet came into being in the autumn of 1948, when it became part of an organisation unique in American theatrical annals, The New York City Center of Music and Drama.

This organisation owes its existence to a real estate tax default by a New York Masonic Lodge. The Lodge owned and operated a building called Mecca Temple. For some reason Mecca Temple was unable to pay its running expenses and city taxes. In 1943, the Lodge and the City of New York came to an agreement whereby the city took possession of the building, which in addition to lodge rooms, offices, etc., contained an auditorium with a seating capacity of 2,692, complete with a stage and dressing rooms—and the city found itself owning a theatre.

At the direction of the late Fiorello H. La Guardia, then Mayor of New York, a commission was created to see what could be done about operating the auditorium. The commission worked out a formula for popular-priced theatrical and musical performances to be given in the auditorium, and the auditorium and the building itself were renamed The New York City Center of Music and Drama.

One by one the City Center established seasons of symphonic concerts, drama, opera and, in 1948, ballet. Each of the performing organisations acquired the designation " New York City " as part of its name. Actually, none of the activities belong to the City of New York. They are private enterprises, pay taxes like any other theatrical enterprise and are subject to all theatrical regulations. They receive no subsidy from the city but operate within the scheme of the City Center, which helps by providing the companies with a permanent home, paying their minimum rehearsal and performance expenses, thus balancing, generally, successfully, the receipts and expenses of one company against those of the others e.g., if, in a given season, the drama makes a profit and the ballet has a deficit, part or all of the profit derived from the drama season goes to cover the deficit of the ballet season. In the case of a general deficit during the operating year the management of the City Center appeal for contributions to public spirited citizens, business establishments, labour unions, etc., and usually get them.

The performing companies have certain obligations unknown to the commercial theatre : they must be non-profit organisations, i.e., they cannot use profits, if any, for the personal gain of individuals connected with the companies, and each company must play at popular prices, the highest not to exceed 3.00 dollars per ticket, including tax.

The history of what is now the New York City Ballet goes back to 1933, when Lincoln Kirstein and Edward M. M. Warburg, scions of famous merchant and banking families, fresh out of Harvard and keenly and actively interested in arts and letters, decided to do something about furthering ballet in the United States. Realising that the fountain-head of a ballet company is a school, they invited a young Russian choreographer, George Balanchine, to establish and head The School of American Ballet.

George Balanchine had begun to make a name for himself in his mother country but soon found that the heavy hand of the post-revolutionary government would not permit free expression of his ideas. He

MARIA TALLCHIEF, PRIMA BALLERINA OF NEW YORK CITY BALLET

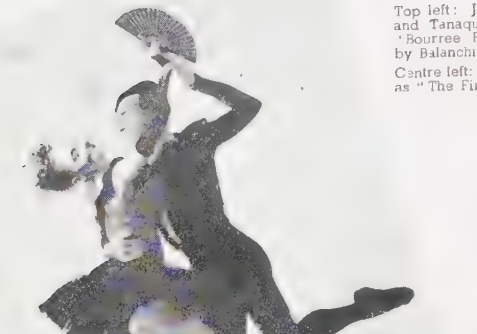
BACKSTAGE AFTER THE FIRST NIGHT OF "ILLUMINATIONS" IN NEW YORK
(LEFT TO RIGHT) TANAQUIL LE CLERCQ, CECIL BEATON, MELISSA HAYDEN, FREDERICK ASHTON AND NICHOLAS MAGALLANES

left Russian in 1924 and shortly thereafter joined the Diaghilev company of which he became the youngest and one of the most talented choreographers. In 1933, when Kirstein and Warburg approached him to organise The School of American Ballet, Balanchine had just finished the Paris and London seasons of his most provocative Les Ballets 1933.

The School of American Ballet was established in January, 1934, with the stated purpose "to preserve and further the tradition of classical theatrical dancing in order to provide adequate material for the growth of a new national art in America." In 1934 this statement was nothing short of revolutionary. Up to then no one ever spoke of ballet without the adjective Russian; no one ever thought of the possibility of having an American ballet.

However, on March 1st, 1935, American ballet became a reality—The American Ballet opened its first season at the Adelphi Theatre, New York. The season lasted two weeks and offered seven ballets, all by Balanchine, none ever presented in America before. The response of the audience and the critics was similar in one respect: all assumed a benevolent and somewhat patronising attitude toward the phenomenon. Neither Kirstein nor Balanchine showed any signs of dismay, then or later. Warburg left the organisation some three years later for personal reasons which had nothing to do with ballet.

In the autumn of 1935, as a direct result of the spring season, The American Ballet was appointed the official ballet of the Metropolitan Opera House. The association was neither happy nor lasting.



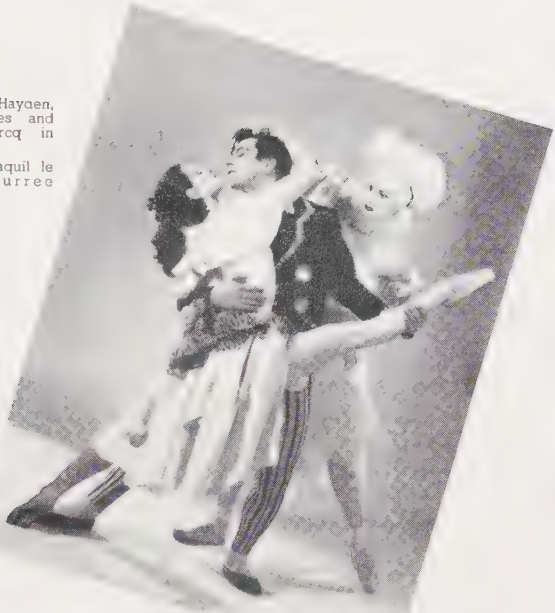
Top left: Jerome Robbins and Tanaquil le Clercq in "Bourree Fantasque" by Balanchine.

Centre left: Maria Tallchief as "The Firebird".

Bottom left: Frederick Ashton rehearsing "Illuminations" with Tanaquil le Clercq aloft.

Top right: Melissa Hayden, Nicholas Magallanes and Tanaquil le Clercq in "Illuminations"

Centre right: Tanaquil le Clercq in "Bourree Fantasque".



Bottom right: Maria Tallchief rehearsing Balanchine's revival of "The Prodigal Son". Jerome Robbins, who has the title role, can just be seen lying on the table.

Balanchine found it difficult to submit to the so-called opera tradition and hence did not please the Opera management and sponsors, who, incidentally, resented the attention the ballet was drawing from the public. In the spring of 1936, Balanchine produced Gluck's *Orpheus* as a ballet-opera. The ballet danced on the stage while the singers sang their parts in the orchestra pit. The production was so out of the ordinary and controversial that it created a scandal in the public press, which did not help The American Ballet.

A year later, In April, 1937, after the opera season had closed, The American Ballet presented on its own a Stravinsky Festival during which three Balanchine ballets to Igor Stravinsky's music were performed, the composer conducting the performances. The programme included *The Card Party*, *Apollo* and *Baiser de la Fée*. The Festival was immensely successful, but the success did not deter the Metropolitan Opera management from bidding adieu to The American Ballet just one year later.

Meanwhile, in the spring of 1936, Lincoln Kirstein founded a junior company, Ballet Caravan, to give an opportunity for expression to young American choreographers, dancers, composers and painters. A small company, Ballet Caravan performed mostly in small towns and colleges in the spring and summer and kept on valiantly, presenting very interesting performances and losing money, through 1939.

The summer of 1940 was financially the most successful Ballet Caravan had ever experienced. Two parallel companies of twenty-six dancers each were performing in the Ford Motor Company Pavilion at the New York World's Fair. A fifteen-minute ballet entitled *A Thousand Times Neigh*, which told the story of the retirement of the horse as a means of transportation, was performed in a specially built and beautifully appointed theatre twelve times a day, every hour on the hour, for six months.

In the spring of 1941, The American Ballet which had been inactive as a performing group since its parting with the Metropolitan Opera, merged with Ballet Caravan under the name American Ballet Caravan to go on a good-will tour of Latin America, sponsored by the United States Office for Co-ordination of Commercial and Cultural Relations Between the American Republics.

This tour turned out to be the last activity of either company until after the war. The draft robbed both companies of a substantial number of male dancers. Lincoln Kirstein was drafted early in 1942.

In the spring of 1946, Kirstein, back from the Army, and Balanchine set out to create a new organisation from the remnants of The American Ballet and Ballet Caravan. In November of that year the new organisation resumed performances under the name Ballet Society.

JANET REED, FORMERLY OF BALLET THEATRE WHO IS NOW WITH THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET, AS SHE APPEARS IN "PAS DE DEUX ROMANTIQUE"

MELISSA HAYDEN AND TODD BOLENDER IN "SYMPHONIE CONCERTANTE", A BALANCHINE BALLET TO MUSIC BY MOZART

Ballet Society was established as a non-profit membership organisation which gave performances only for its subscribers. This method of operation lasted, however, only one year. The demand for tickets for individual performances from non-subscribers, i.e., people who either neglected to subscribe or those who could not afford to send in the money—1.00 or 100.00 dollars, depending on the location of their seats, in one lump sum for the entire season—forced Ballet Society to open the box office. In addition, the restricted number of performances spread over two seasons during the year made the venture a very costly one. By March, 1948, it became clear that if Ballet Society wished to continue, it would have to find a way of giving more performances for more spectators.

At this time, Morton Baum, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the New York City Center of Music and Drama, highly impressed with the quality of the production of Ballet Society, invited the company to become part of the operational plan of the City Center. Balanchine and Kirstein accepted the invitation, and in the autumn of 1948, Ballet Society, as the holding organisation, named its performing company the New York City Ballet. The first season of the New York City Ballet opened on October 11th, 1948.

Thus, for fifteen years, interrupted only by the war, The American Ballet, under one name or another, but always directed by the same two people, has continued its progress, overcoming handicap after obstacle, financial crisis after artistic discouragement, until today, as the New York City Ballet, it has become the most promising of American and American-domiciled ballet companies. It is fairly safe to predict that if the United States ever has anything like a National Ballet, the New York City Ballet will occupy this position.

TANAQUIL LE CLERCQ AND NICHOLAS MAGALLANES IN "JONES BEACH", ONE OF THE NEW BALANCHINE BALLETS

DANCE IN NEW YORK—SPRING 1950

By ARTHUR TODD

DURING the last Spring, New York was the scene of so much balletic and other dance activities that audiences were often kept on the run to keep up with the full calendar of events. This was because three companies—Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Ballet Theatre and Katherine Dunham & Co.—descended almost simultaneously on the city and, for the last week in April, all three were playing in competition to each other. Each had new works or novelties to attract the increasingly ballet-thirsty public which now exists in New York, though not one of the companies played to continuous capacity houses.

The Spring ballet season got under way officially on Easter Sunday night (April 9th), when the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo ushered in its three week season at the Metropolitan Opera House. Its first night was a gala one indeed with all of the dance world on hand to welcome visiting guest star Yvette Chauviré, *première danseuse étoile de France*, who presented her version of *Giselle*. Due, perhaps, to first night nervousness, Chauviré danced the entire first act at the peak of her dynamic range, and modulation and nuance were completely by-passed. Frederic Franklin, who had but a scant week to rehearse with Chauviré, was also inclined to over-mime and generally exaggerate during the first act. In the second act, however, he was more restrained and, once again, proved his superior qualities as a partner. Chauviré, meanwhile danced the major portion of the second act in a trance-like state that may well have had a certain dramatic validity but here it was at variance with the

performance of the rest of the company. Especially brilliant, however, was Mary Ellen Moylan as the Queen of the Wilis, a role in which her pure technique and dramatic style shone to marked advantage. As a matter of fact, Miss Moylan walked, or, better still, danced, away with every role that came her way this Spring and she ended the season, in the opinion of many, as the unofficial first ballerina of the company.

The second and third new works of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo's season—*La Mort du Cygne* and *Romeo et Juliette*—were also starring vehicles for Chauviré and, while they exhibited more of her magnificent dance talents, they certainly were undistinguished choreographically. *La Mort du Cygne*, which was originally choreographed by Lifar for the French film of that name (re-titled *Ballerina* in America), was pretty ridiculous as a ballet save for Chauviré's admirable control and fluidity and Franklin's superior partnering. Even worse was *Romeo et Juliette*, set to a Tchaikovsky score, with Chauviré and Franklin again the principals. No choreographer was listed for this work so it is difficult to know whom to blame for the haphazard series of vignettes which gave a capsule version of the Shakespearian plot. Mainly, it was a series of *pas de deux* and solos, more mimed than danced, that alternated back and forth from left to right stage, while half a curtain was drawn to reveal a pretty awful series of settings. The small *ensemble*, which appeared in the duel scene and elsewhere, added to the general confusion. The only distinguishing aspects of this work were Chauviré's superb *petit tours* and *bourrées* encompassed by a beautiful ease of motion.

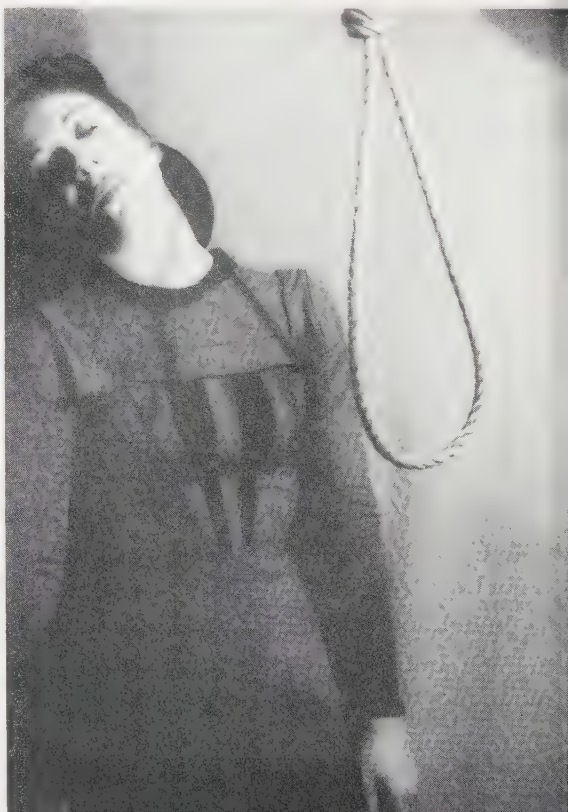
According to reports that have since come back from Paris, an angry contingent there is up in arms over Chauviré's press reception in New York and all sorts of rumours are afloat about critical retaliations that may be expected when American dancers José Limon and Martha Graham make their respective debuts in Paris during May and June. Actually, it is the whole visiting guest star system which is at fault and Chauviré, herself, is in no sense to blame. She is, of course, a magnificent dancer but she was given a scant week to rehearse with a strange company whose milieu and approach were markedly dissimilar to hers. One can only hope that Chauviré will return to the United States another time for a longer stay so that she may thus become assimilated and acclimated to an American company.

Two other works—*Prince Igor* and *Les Elfes*—were revived for no apparently good reason while a revised version of *Madronos* gained but little in its re-working. Happily, however, the Ballet Russe company and personnel seemed in better form than they have in many seasons. Alexandra Danilova is still the queen of Russian-American ballet and she danced with great verve and spirit, looking more bouyant than ever. Mary Ellen Moylan brought great style and excitement to all her roles, especially in *Ballet Imperial*, and Ruthanna Boris was crisp, fresh and assured as always though she made far too few appearances during the season. Leon Danielian, as usual, stood out with his brilliance of projection and his superfine footwork while Oleg Tupine made strong advances in the field of partnering. The *corps de ballet*, which was pretty poor last fall, and seemed even more so after seeing the Sadler's Wells *ensemble*, is now more accurate and seemed full of life and vigour. However, the orchestra and the staging still are mediocre and the repertory lacks diversity. What is strongly needed are several major new contemporary works.

The main event of the Spring season was Ballet Theatre's Gala Tenth Anniversary Season which opened a three week run on April 23rd at the Center Theatre (not to be confused with the municipal New York City Center Theatre) with a repertory of some thirty-five classical and modern works. Ballet Theatre, it is happy to report, is still the finest company we have and perhaps this is why our State Department is lending its prestige, encouragement and

NORA KAYE IN "FALL RIVER LEGEND", AGNES DE MILLE'S BALLET FOR BALLET THEATRE

Photograph by Carl van Vechten



Photograph by Leo Friedman

DIANA ADAMS AND HUGH LAING REHEARSING "NIMBUS" WITH ITS CHOREOGRAPHER, ANTONY TUDOR

o-operation to its forthcoming European tour which will take it to Scotland, England, Italy, Germany and elsewhere.

Those of us who were in the first night audience when this company made its debut in January, 1940, at the same theatre were indeed happy to be present once more at the gala premier to celebrate the first decade in the history of our best ballet company. The programme contained a superlative performance of *Les Sylphides*, Tudor's amusing *Gala Performance*, the premier of William Dollar's *Jeux* and a magnificent interpretation of de Mille's *Fall River Legend*. Nora Kaye, who was a member of Ballet Theatre's *corps de ballet* in 1940, appeared in both *Jeux* and *Fall River Legend* and won a tremendous personal ovation at the conclusion of the evening, once more establishing what is already generally known—that she is unquestionably America's greatest dramatic ballerina.

Of the four new ballets premiered—Antony Tudor's *Nimbus*, Herbert Ross's *Caprichos*, John Taras's *Designs With Strings* and William Dollar's *Jeux*—the two outstanding works were *Nimbus* and *Caprichos*. *Jeux*, like Nijinsky's 1913 ballet, is similarly concerned with an interlude between two girls and a man that stems from a tennis game. Set to Debussy's rythmically varied score, Dollar provided some distinctive phrasing that was above the more contrived aspects of this work with its otherwise realistic and standard movements. Nora Kaye, Norma Vance and Igor Youskevitch gave crisp and sparkling performances in the rather every-day costumes provided by David Ffolkes.

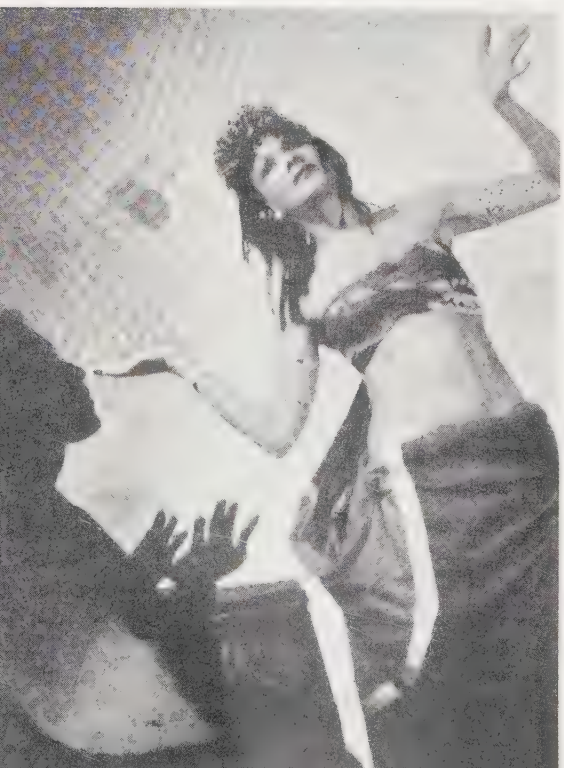
Designs With Strings, which was originally choreographed by John Taras for the now defunct Metropolitan Ballet, has many fine compositional virtues that show the influence that Balanchine has had on our

younger choreographers. While the inspired touch of Balanchine is lacking in this work, Taras has provided many sections that develop naturally and inventively. Erik Bruhn, a virile blond Norseman, on leave of absence from the Royal Danish Ballet, made his New York debut in this work and performed it with considerable assurance and ease. The five other dancers in this abstract ballet were Diana Adams, Norma Vance, Lillian Lanese, Dorothy Scott and Holland Stoudenmire.

Caprichos, one of the resounding successes of the season was choreographed by twenty-four year old Herbert Ross, a young man gifted with a wonderful sense of balletic theatre. This tense and absorbing ballet in four episodes is based on Goya's commentaries to his *Caprichos* etchings and is set to music by Béla Bartok which is supplied by an instrumental trio consisting of clarinet, violin and piano. *Caprichos* was first performed in January, 1950, at the Hunter College Playhouse, New York City, under the sponsorship of the Choreographer's Workshop and was then purchased by Oliver Smith for the Spring Season of Ballet Theatre.

Caprichos is performed by twelve dancers in some magnificent costumes by Helene Pons against a plain backcloth. Though there is little thematic relationship between the four episodes, the two girls of the first episode who "have seats enough and nothing to do better with them than carry them on their heads" serve as onlookers and as a sort of unifying Greek chorus in the next three episodes. The second one, "No one ever escapes who wants to be caught," is concerned with a wild and brutal flight, pursuit, capture and seduction that is danced superbly by Nana Gollner, Eric Braun and Peter Gladke. In the third episode, which is the most spectacular and unusual of all, John Kriza (in latter performances the role was alternately danced by Hugh Laing) dances a stunning adagio with the lifeless and insert body of Ruth Ann Koesun which is dropped into his arms. This section, in illustration of "If he were more gallant and less of a bore she would come to life again", contains some unbelievably difficult movements. The fourth episode ". . . They are determined to kill this saintly woman . . . No one can make her ashamed who has nothing to be ashamed of . . ." is a rite of torture of the burning of a saint at the stake. This terrifying new work has a wonderful unity of style and it is full of macabre beauty and sardonic irony.

A NEW PHOTOGRAPH OF KATHERINE DUNHAM



For the May 3rd world premier of Antony Tudor's new ballet *Nimbus* an audience of stellar note turned out to greet the new work. Those who expected to welcome another *Pillar of Fire* or *Lilac Garden* into the repertory were instead offered a ballet of today that is more proleterian than psychological in its concerns with the life and dreams of a working girl.

Its opening scene discovers Nora Kaye, The Dreamer, in a bed tilted almost upright on the stage in an ingenious set that gives the audience the illusion of a ceiling-eye view of the proceedings. Here, at the foot of the bed, Diana Adams, The Dreamer or dream-self, dances out a dream which shows how simply a "Dream-Beau" may be charmed. Nora Kaye awakes and walks out of the set and through a series of doors at the stage left. When the lights come up, we see a middle-class apartment roof top in New York which is also populated by other apartment dwellers. As might be expected, the girl again meets the "Dream-Beau" and her earlier dream of him comes to pass. But this, too, comes to an end and her beau sees her down to the apartment door. As the curtain falls, we see the heroine preparing for another day of work.

Nimbus is by no means the most eloquent nor profound work of Tudor's. Rather, it seems reminiscent of the Broadway musical comedy dances that he composed on 1945 for *The Day Before Spring*. Saul Bolasni's costumes likewise seem more suited to the broadway theatre than they do to a ballet. Oliver Smith, however, has provided another superb setting in his apartment house roof-top. Tudor's most minor works, of course, exhibit a craftsmanship that is admirable and we again sense his remarkable understanding and employment of the major qualities of

ch of his dancers. He has provided Nora Kaye with intricate and complex assignment which she ecutes quite flawlessly. While Hugh Laing is egated mainly to the role of a partner, he dances th his customary intensity. Diana Adams domi- tes the first third of the work in a role that gives full y to her lyric potentialities. The score by Louis uenberg is keyed to the mood of the work, never trudes and serves as an ideal background for the eam and real-life sequences. Though *Nimbus* seems trivial theme for a choreographer of Tudor's stature, is indeed good to have him and his new work on nd. With more rehearsals and a few revisions, *Nimbus* ay well become one of the more popular, if not e most profound, works in the repertory.

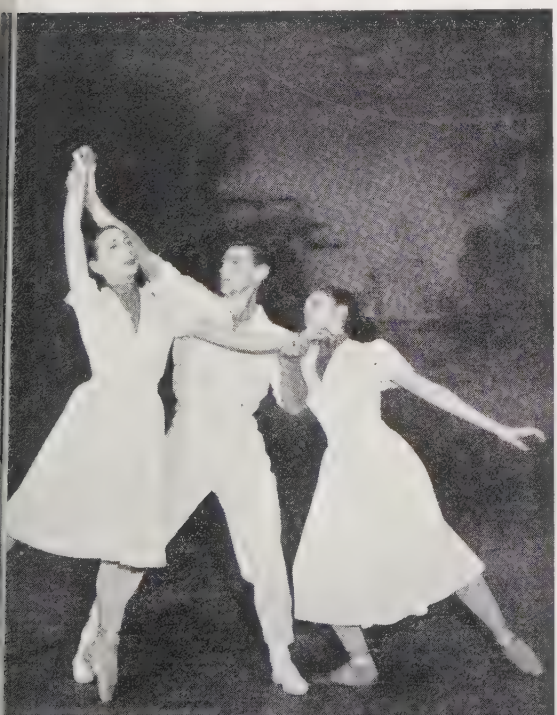
Looking back on Ballet Theatre's season, one can call many especially fine performances that stand t sharply in retrospect. Among them are Nora aye's inspired opening night performance in *Fall ver Legend* ; John Kriza's fine classical style as hibited in *Les Sylphides* ; Igor Youskevitch (un- estionably our greatest male classical dancer) ually at home in the Bluebird variation in *Princess urora* as he was as the flesh-and-blood tennis player *Jeux* ; Hugh Laing's savage portrayal of the seducer *Pillar of Fire* ; Erick Bruhn's elevation and *ballon* in he *Pas de Trois* in *Princess Aurora* ; Paul Godkin's solo in the Jerome Robbins' role in *Interplay* and Ruth Ann Koesun's amazing performance as the inert figure in *Caprichos*.

In marked contrast to the full fare of ballet was the return of Katherine Dunham and her company to the Broadway Theatre in mid-April. After two years of European triumphs, one senses that Dunham herself has lost some of her wonderful former abandon and primitive power. The company and Miss Dunham have become much more exotic and stylised and *chic* is perhaps the best term to describe their pictorial works. Both of the new numbers—*Afrique* and *Jazz In Five Movements*—are superficial and indicate a lessening of Dunham's former artistic integrity. However, the men in the cast, especially Vanoye Aikens, Lenwood Morris and Wilbert Bradley, give first rate and often thrilling support to Miss Dunham. John Pratt has provided some simple but colourful decor and a collection of stunning costumes. Though most of the proceedings are more suited to a Parisian or Broadway revue than a dance concert, audiences have been enthusiastic and the engagement has been extended until late May, at which time Dunham and her company depart for a South America tour.

Quite in contrast to Dunham's effete production, were Pearl Primus' lecture-demonstration performances given in early May at the Museum of Natural

NORA KAYE, IGOR YOUSKEVITCH AND NORMA VANCE IN "JEUX", WILLIAM DOLLAR'S NEW BALLET FOR BALLET THEATRE

Photograph by Eileen Darby, Graphic House, Inc.



RUTH ANN KOESUN AND JOHN KRIZA IN HERBERT ROSS'S "CAPRICHOS" WHICH WAS THE OUTSTANDING NEW WORK OF THE BALLET THEATRE SEASON

Photograph by Eileen Darby, Graphic House, Inc.

History. Pearl Primus, the young American-Negro dancer, has recently returned from a year's research in Africa, a trip made possible by a grant from the Rosenwald Foundation, and her new works are based upon her findings in West and Central Africa. One of these was *Fanga*, a tribal dance of Liberia, which has been in existence from before the recording of history. Used as a dance of welcome with which the natives greet important visitors, it is full of subtlety and the direct contact with the earth which is a characteristic of all African dance. Incidentally, it was for her performance of this dance in Africa that Pearl Primus was decorated by the President of Liberia. For her concert performances Pearl Primus has devised a system of recreating this authentic material that is technically and theatrically superb. Danced to the beats of a "talking drum," she shows how the dancer first approaches the drums, how the drums command and, finally, how the dancer is accepted or rejected depending upon how he dances. As might be expected, Miss Primus outstepped the drums in a vibrating, pulsating performance that made her return to American doubly welcome. Unquestionably, this young, electric, exuberant dancer proved that she is still our finest American Negro dancer as well as being one of the leading members in the younger generation of modern American dance.

New York News

BALLET-WEARY New Yorkers, and their number includes dance critics as well as balletomanes, are looking forward at this writing to May 14th, the last evening of Ballet Theatre, which is game, set and match of the ballet season.

The season has been long and busy, the busiest New York has experienced in many years. What with seasons of the New York City Ballet, Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, Ballet Theatre, Sadler's Wells Ballet, Katherine Dunham's company and performances of modern dance companies and individual dancers, there has not been a week without dance performances.

Quite obviously the four weeks of Sadler's Wells at the Metropolitan furnished the greatest thrill. Our own New York City Ballet contributed its share of excitement, too, especially its February-March season, which has been reported here.

If the autumn season of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo was rather placid, its spring season with Yvette Chauviré as guest artist provided a good deal of interest. The dreary repertoire which Mlle Chauviré brought with her did not do justice to the great ballerina and consequently her personal success was not as great as it could have been or will be if she returns, as it is being rumored, to Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo next season.

Ballets de Paris, which had an excellent box office success on Broadway, failed to make an impression on ballet goers. They were only slightly amused by Roland Petit's excursion into Dr. Kinsey's domain. It was nice to see Colette Marchand's legs reproduced in nearly every national magazine and all tabloids, but that was just about all.

Ballet Theatre's season at the Center Theatre, now in its last few days, is as unexciting as could be imagined despite some excellent dancing by its principals and a well trained corps.

For the first time in America dance history this summer will see a real exodus of American companies to Europe. It began with the Ruth Page Company, now called Les Ballets Americains, which opened its four-week season at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées, Paris, on May 8th.

Next to go will be Martha Graham and her company who will begin their Paris season on June 27th, also at the Champs-Elysées. They will be followed by New York City Ballet, which will have its première at Covent Garden on July 10th. Ballet Theatre will leave New York July 15th and open their season in Germany, where they will dance for the U.S. Occupational Forces as well as civilians, followed by a season in Italy. The week of August 21st, they will dance at the Edinburgh Festival. A three-week London season following the Edinburgh engagement is on the schedule.

Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo will spend most of the summer in California, where they will have a long season at the huge Hollywood Bowl.

The English visit of the New York City Ballet is the talk of the ballet world here. A New York dance critic or two are planning to go to London for at least part of the season and several of the better heeled American balletomanes have booked passage for the same purpose.

The Dinner Dance given April 20th, by Ballet Associates in America for the New York City Ballet was a very successful social affair and brought in some money for the ballet company. It will have enough to re-dress at least one of its major works.

"DANCE NEWS" Service—Special to "Ballet Today"

Martha Graham for London

THE long awaited arrival of Martha Graham, foremost exponent of the American Modern Dance, will become a fact next month, when she and her company open a three-week season at the Piccadilly Theatre on July 17th.

Her programme for the season will include *Appalachian Spring*, *Letter to the World*, *Deaths and Entrances*, *El Penitente*, *Every Soul is a Circus* and *John Brown*.

THE CHOREOGRAPHER'S ART IN OUR TIME (2)

by PAUL TASSOVIN

my last article I reprimanded aspiring choreographers for their pretentiousness, and for their k of serious intent ; for their careless slap-dash thods, in fact for the completely pseudo outlook attitude to their work which is so much in evidence. elt that we had endured enough ill-conceived rtions, and the time was at hand when somebody uld call a halt to the lower ranks of " step-makers." ving voiced my grumble, I now take it upon my mble self to offer a word of counsel.

would, if it were possible, like to give the incentive some of the young apprentices to pursue their art a higher conclusion ; but to accomplish this I uld have to persuade them to go back to the ginning. To create dance is not so easy as so many the young school seem to think. The gift of reography may be God-given, but even so it cannot become manifest without thought and labour ; the rudiments must be learned ; the rules observed.

To begin at the beginning then, the apprentice-choreographers requirements will be :

1. A workable knowledge of his medium.
2. A musical and mathematical sense.

Possessing these virtues he may proceed to :

a. The choice of a theme translatable into balletic terms.
b. The choice of relative music.
c. The sketching of a dramatic plot.
d. The treatment of structural form.

I think we are all agreed that the choreographers' instrument is the dancer's body. The dancer who would transform himself into a creative artist must learn a vocabulary of movement ; he must acquire a range, not only of his own physical possibilities, but

RUTHANNA BORIS AND LEON DANIELIAN IN "SWAN LAKE" AS PERFORMED BY THE BALLET RUSSE DE MONTE CARLO

a scientific knowledge of dance in general. It is important that he learn the essentials of classical dance, and acquire a wide knowledge of traditional and national influences. By absorbing the dance conventions of other countries, and of other times, he will gradually be able to develop his own characteristics and style.

For the commencement the apprentice should experiment with simple patterns expressing simple themes, to match simple rhythms. As he gains confidence and mastery he may be able to take more interest in his subject matter. He should study emotional and dramatic development, and learn to build his work in dramatic shape.

To develop a theme or a number of themes in movement is the basis of any serious ballet. To develop a theme with truth, consistency and eloquence certain fundamental laws must be observed. The accepted symbols of the dance that have come down to us must not be abused or ignored ; they represent the logical process out of which the dance form has grown, and from these traditional channels it may continue evolve in a true line.

There are a thousand ways of saying " yes " or " no ", but in a given instance there can be only one inflection that is totally in accord. The word symbols remain basically unchanged ; the inflection is different, transfiguring the word into a different meaning. In the same way to translate the expression of a thought or mood in terms of dance there can be only one totally eloquent gesture.

The question of music brings many problems, particularly to the choreographer whose knowledge of music is self-taught. It is not always easy to define a musical structure. A composition, whether it be a sonata, a symphony or a concerto, is comprised of a number of tunes or interlacing themes. A composer may embrace in a movement a number of motifs ; but he uses his artistry to arrange them in aesthetic order, which the choreographer must never ignore. Not only should the choreographer be well acquainted with the melodies ; he should familiarise himself with the underlying accents and rhythms. A ballet which is tied to the core of the music, rather than to surface tunes will have a far greater depth and power.

In studying the placing of accents and climaxes the artist's imagination and invention has to grapple with the problems of structural form. Movement which is the material of dance must be arranged in patterns of relationship—in this way is form created. Form might be termed the outer garment, the cloak within whose folds the whole composition is wrapped. Within its confines nothing must look out of place or incorrect. Form is a method of relativity hewn out of tradition. It gives order, cohesion, consistency. Without form, emotional expression will tumble out in a mass of confusion, uncontrolled, undisciplined.

The choice of subject matter may often be inspired, and where the motif is personally felt with the artist's sense of urgency, it will obviously be sincere and valuable. When, however, the apprentice has to search for a subject he will be wise to avoid complex themes, and in the other extreme he should avoid the pedestrian, the commonplace. There is no subject that cannot be expressed in dance, but each subject brings its own difficulties of interpretation into form. Undoubtedly the abstract form presents the choreographer with the least problems, and gives him the freest rein. Realism in its naked form is worse than bad colour photography. Realism is only possible when sublimated by a master hand ; then it becomes not realism, but something more real.

Having covered what I feel are the basic principles of the art, I would like to finish with a word on production. The choreographer has not finished his work when he has taught the dancers their movements throughout the ballet. It is his job to attend to the many details of production, to inspire his artists to a full understanding of their roles, to coach them when necessary into the correct expressive style, to see that the whole work flows in a continuous line, thus achieving a satisfying and artistic cohesion. The questions of dynamics is his province too, the blending of ingredients, the smooth transition from one plane to another, the stylistic treatment, the lighting, even the rise and fall of the curtain should be closely gone into, so that every happening during the unfolding of the work shall be purposeful, meaningful and compelling.

(To be continued)

Fonteyn at La Scala

A most signal triumph was scored by Margot Fonteyn at the gala performance of *The Sleeping Beauty* given at La Scala Opera House, Milan, on April 21st, in which Pamela May and Robert Helpmann also appeared.

" Resplendent, vibrant princess " (wrote the Corriere della Sera), " Margot Fonteyn shines with an art truly majestic and by her perfect technique which is quite astounding." Decor and costumes were by the painter, Giulio Coltellacci, production by Nicolas Benois, with choreography supervised by Marguerite Wallmann.

The photograph by Ed Carswell, Graphic House, on the cover shows Melissa Hayden and Herbert Bliss in Jerome Robbins' "Age of Anxiety" which will be presented in London by the New York City Ballet

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Bouquet of the Month

One of the joys of ballet going is the delight given by a small performance. Skill in a minor role does not go unnoticed by the audience but it may never receive critical acclaim because so much must perforce go unrecorded, and it may in any case occur unexpectedly on a night when no critic is officially present. In future *Ballet Today* will present a verbal bouquet each month for some outstanding minor performance, in the humble knowledge that many others may also deserve the honour.

The first bouquet is for MARGARET DALE whose leaping entrance as the Equestrienne in the Circus scene of *Ballabile* brings a round of applause from an audience which normally considers it " not the done thing " to clap in the middle of a dance.

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July 16th. George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein on the work of the New York City Ballet.

Full particulars of membership, etc., can be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. Stanley W. Hawkins, 47 Ashchurch Grove, London, W.12.

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